
NEWS From:

Congressman Mike Honda

FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA



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Honda Pushes To Restore Funding for Family Literacy at Even Start Family Learning Center in Campbell

Campbell, CA— Today, U.S. Congressman Mike Honda (D-San Jose) toured the Campbell Even Start Family Learning Center, a federally funded family literacy program that supports low-income families by integrating early childhood education, parenting and adult education into a unified program designed to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty and illiteracy. Despite the positive impact that Even Start continues to make in the South Bay, and across the nation, President Bush has called for a 20% cut in the Even Start program in Fiscal Year 2003.

Even Start supports parents in their challenging role as their child's first and most important teacher. The goal of Even Start is to establish instructional programs for low-income families that promote adult literacy and train parents to support the educational growth of their children while simultaneously preparing children for success in regular school programs. Even Start families must agree to participate in adult education class, early childhood education classes, parenting classes and parent and child together activities before being enrolled in the program.

“Even Start is a successful program because it takes an innovative, family-oriented and community-based approach to teaching parents and children important skills in a group setting,” said Honda. **“The 20 percent cut that President Bush has proposed for Even Start next year will endanger the Family Learning Center here in Campbell, and many like it across the nation, and will compromise the ability of dedicated professionals at learning centers across the nation to help low-income families overcome poverty and illiteracy.”**

“Even Start is a unique and effective preventative solution to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty and illiteracy that addresses the needs of the entire family through structured parent and child activities and parent training classes,” said Campbell Even Start Family Literacy Program Director, Gina Phi. **“I am thankful to Congressman Honda for recognizing the importance of this comprehensive family literacy program and for opposing the proposed cut in Even Start funding.”**

As Honda toured the facility, he interacted with students and instructors to learn more about this important program firsthand. Honda, who strongly opposes the cuts to Even Start funding proposed by President Bush, spoke to parents, students and education officials about the importance of the Even Start program to the community and the need to fully fund it next year.

“Like all Americans, I am confident that we will win the global war against terrorism, but I fear the many cuts in education proposed by President Bush in next year’s budget may cause us to lose the battle at home to protect and educate future generations of Americans,” said Honda. **“As a former teacher and Principal, I know that Even Start makes a real difference for our families and our communities—it deserves the support of this Congress, and the support of the President.”**